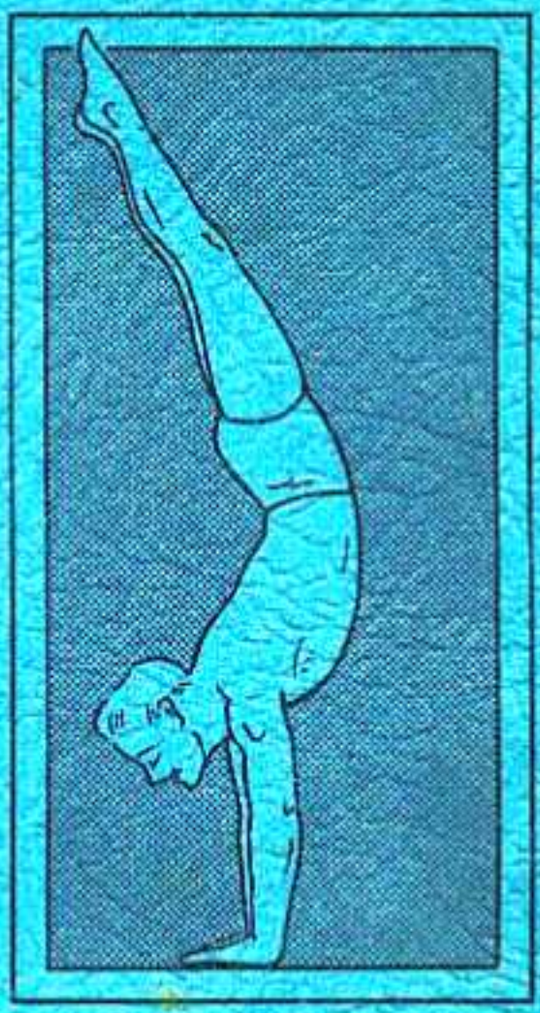


THE YORK
HANDBALANCING
Course No. 1

THE YORK *HANDBALANCING* Course No. 1

DID YOU EVER NOTICE when you see a group of strong men together that, sooner or later, they take time out for some handbalancing? Handbalancing to a bodybuilder, a weightlifter or any barbell man, is as natural as a duck taking to water. I think one reason for this is the fact that barbell trained men are so much stronger than others that the difficult balancing stunts are to them very easy. Furthermore, lifting barbells has given them unusual co-ordination which is very necessary to the would-be balancer.

The purpose of this course is to instruct the beginner in the rudiments of handbalancing, correct the errors that most handbalancers make and explain the more popular feats and routines to him. We will start off with the very simplest form of balance and work up to the extremely difficult feats known only to a few professionals. We will go through a discussion on the theory of balancing - the knowledge of which will turn the average handbalancer into an expert. If you properly digest this First Course you can, in a few months time, become quite proficient at balancing.

The theory of handbalancing is simple, it sums up like this; if an imaginary line be drawn through the balancer's body there should be, when the body is in perfect balance,

an equal weight of the parts of the body on each side of that line! There is a center of gravity in any balancing body which must always have a definite relation to the part of the body touching the floor. (In the case of the handstand, for example, the hands are the part of the body touching the floor and the line drawn through the body and through the center of gravity will always pass through the hands). I am sure you will find this much clearer when you examine the diagrams of the various balances.

When a body is perfectly balanced, as in the case of the handstand, it is said to be in a state of equilibrium. All balancing is based on ways and means of attaining and maintaining such a state of equilibrium.

IF YOU TAKE a ten-pin or an Indian club and place it top down (small knob on the floor) you can, by carefully holding it to the vertical, place it in a state of equilibrium and it will balance there indefinitely. You can do the same thing with a chair on a firm floor; tip it backwards on the two rear legs and by carefully moving it into the "plane of the center of gravity" place it in a state of equilibrium.

Such balances are simple with any solid however, the human body is far from being a solid. It is a wobbly pulsating mass and to maintain a state of equilibrium is virtually impossible but - we can by muscular effort continually vary the "plane of the center of gravity" so as to keep the body in a state closely resembling equilibrium.

THE ABILITY TO CONTROL this muscular effort in order to maintain such a state of equilibrium completely depends on two tiny sense organs located one in each ear! They are known as the "Labyrinths of the Middle Ear. Without these organs you could neither-walk, run or even stand upright without falling over! These Labyrinths consist of a series of membraneous tubes immersed in a fluid and contained in the bony cavity of each inner ear.

Each of these tubes, of which there are three in each ear (six altogether), are semi-circular and placed one in each plane and at right angles to each other. Two are vertical and one horizontal. In each semi-circular tube of the

Labyrinth is a fluid known as "Perilymph". The movement of this Perilymph back and forth, up and down, is the hidden mechanism that gives us balance, whether standing or walking on our feet or, most important to the hand-balancer, balancing on his hands.

The Perilymph fluid lies in the bottom of each of the three tubes due to gravity and any change in the plane or position of the body causes the fluid to move one way or the other. As the fluid moves it contacts tiny hairs that line the tubes which in turn send a nervous impulse to the brain telling us to compensate by muscular effort the accompanying change in center of gravity! It is like a combination builder's level and Gyroscope.

Since handbalancing is the opposite of standing erect the secret of learning to balance on the hands depends on our ability to teach the muscles to do instantly that which our Labyrinth organ tells us to do. Those who learn balancing quickest are those who have mastered this ability.

AS A MEANS of determining your balancing ability try the following exercise. Stand on one foot and raise the other fully outstretched behind you as you lean forward using your arms to counter-balance the leg. As you become more limber and better able to balance you can lower the shoulders well below the height of your hips and counter-balance by raising the outstretched leg much higher.

One of the little secrets to good handbalancing is in the flexibility of the wrists. Since the hands are to be the only part of the body in contact with the floor the wrists take most of the strain. The ease with which your wrists permit your hand to bend back will to a great extent determine your balancing potentialities. Examine the extent of your wrist movement; if it is stiff and will not bend back as shown in Fig. 1, Page 4, you will first have to go through some loosening-up exercises. I have seen some expert handbalancers who, after a lay-off, fail to go up into a perfect balance the first few times they tried simply because their wrists were stiff and this prevented the body from assuming its correct inverted position. I have also met some fine balancers who have complained that their wrists felt tired after a session of balancing. This could only come from weakness so if your

wrists should feel tired, either during the preliminary stages of this course or after you have learned, you require some wrist strengthening exercises.

THE BEST WRIST EXERCISES I know of are; rolling up a weight which is fastened to roller by a cord. (The YORK WRIST DEVELOPER was specially designed for the purpose of strengthening the wrists, grip and forearm and I recommend its use). The use of the YORK HAND CRUSHER GRIPS add greatly to the tendon strength of the wrists, all of which is a requisite of the good handbalancer. The Regular Two Hands Curl with barbell and the Reverse Curl with either barbell or dumbells are two excellent exercises for the wrist. Grasping a light dumbell (about 10 Lbs.) by one end and rotating it about is another.

Practice some of these exercises and in a few weeks you will be amazed at the additional arm and grip strength you have acquired. By all means do some form of wrist strengthening movements; in the end you will be well repaid for the time spent. You will not only be a better balancer but have a fine pair of forearms to show for it not to mention the much stronger grip which is essential in advanced Hand-to-Hand balancing and tumbling.

Before each handbalancing session manipulate your hands by pushing back on the fingers as shown in Fig. 1.

Repeat this exercise until your fingers have bent back much farther than they did on your initial try. Also do this during the rest periods between the wrist strengthening exercises previously mentioned.

Clenching and unclenching the fists is another good exercise to increase wrist flexibility.

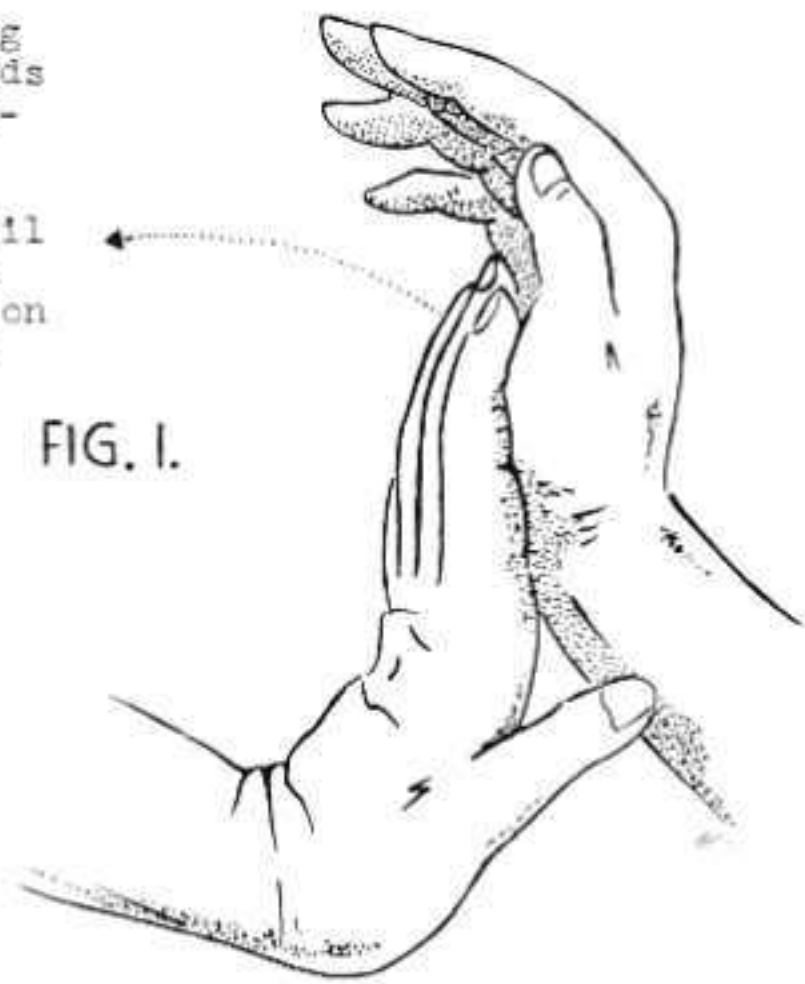


FIG. 1.

The next movement I would like you to try, one that will not only strengthen your wrists but accustom you to supporting the weight of your body and the hands. Place your hands on the floor, arms straight and feet extended behind. The fingers should all be pointing forward and turned neither in or out. Lean forward as far as possible in the manner shown in Fig. 2.

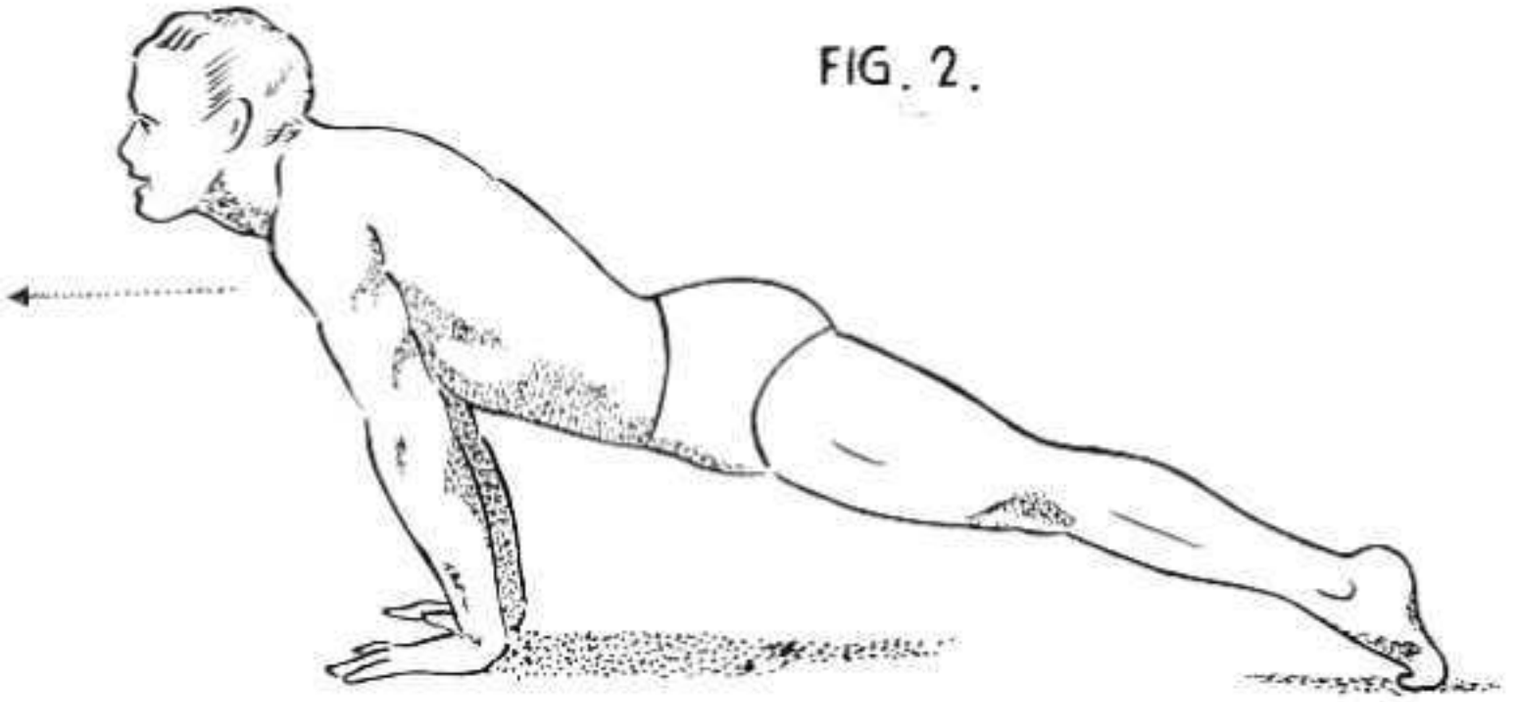


FIG. 2.

BY FAR THE BEST means of learning control quickly is the balancing exercise shown in Fig. 3. Place both hands on the floor about 12 inches apart and bring the knees up along the outside of each elbow. From this position lean forward as far as possible until the feet leave the floor.

The practice of this exercise will quickly accustom you to supporting your entire weight on your hands.

LEAN WELL FORWARD !

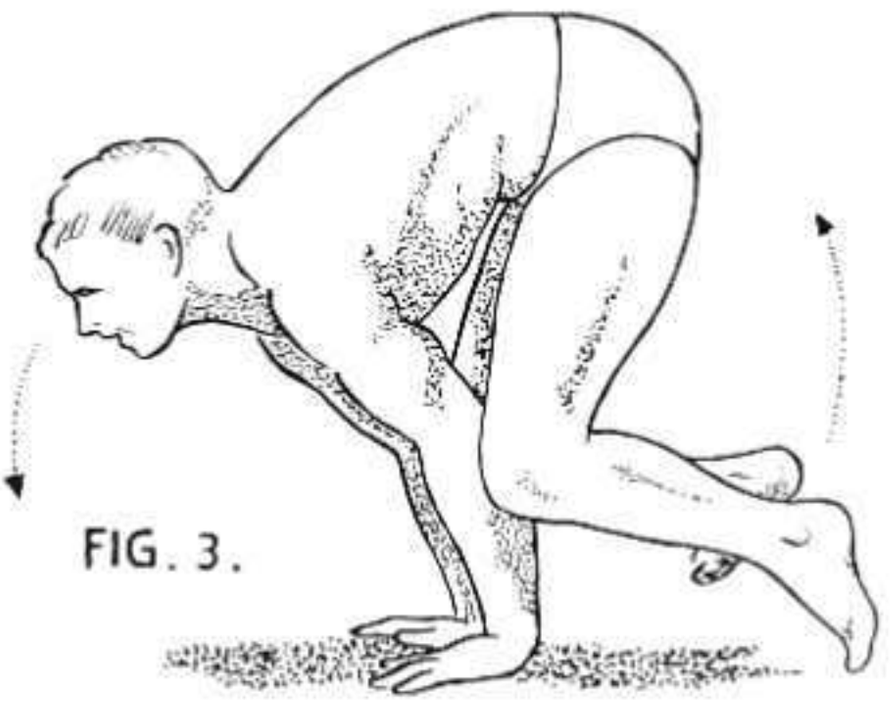


FIG. 3.

IF YOU HAVE NEVER tried the handstand you must first accustom yourself to the inverted position. The simplest way to do this is by the ordinary headstand. If you are practicing this Handbalancing Course on the hard wood floor I might first of all suggest you make a pad for your head protection. This may be a towel neatly folded into a square. Place the fore crown of the head on the pad, the hands 12 to 16 inches behind the head and about 18 inches apart. With a kick of the legs go up into the vertical position as shown in Fig. 4.

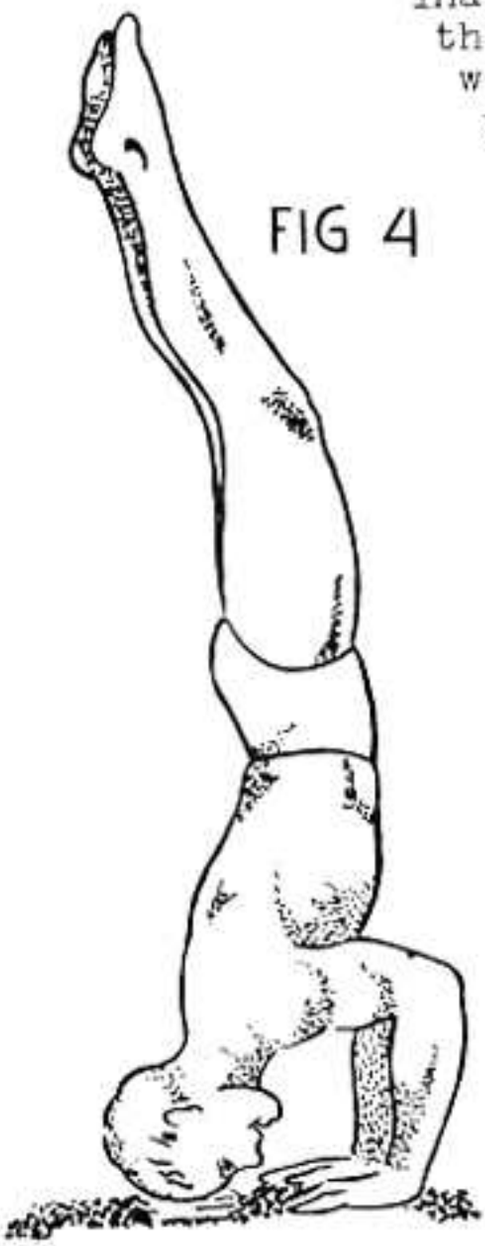
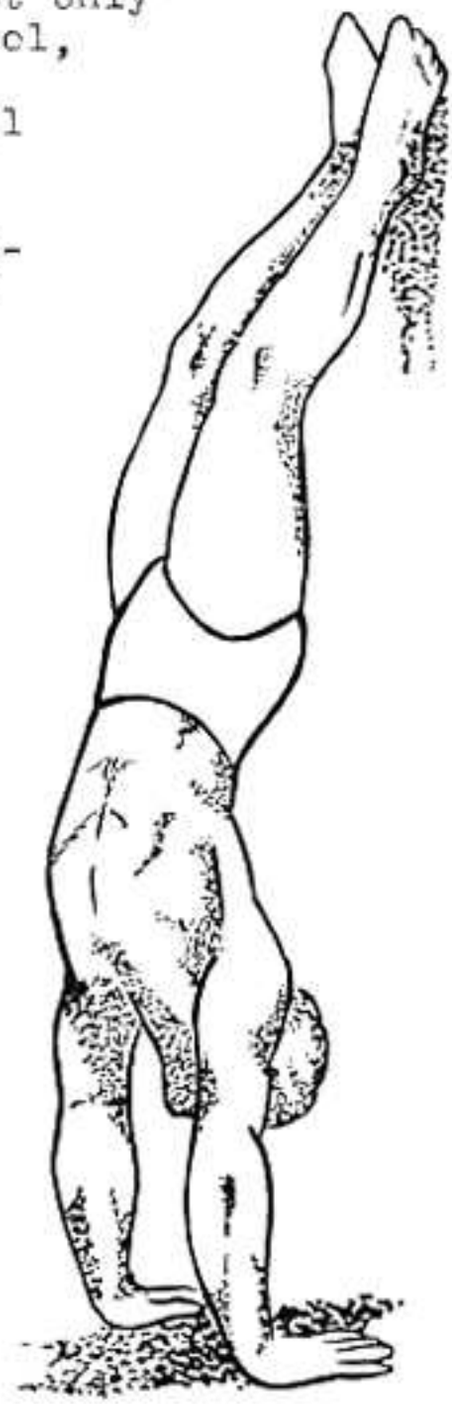


FIG 4

By permitting most of the weight to rest on the hands you not only get better control, but strengthen muscles that will play an important part in the difficult "Press-up to Handstand" described later in this Course.

FIG. 5.



Next I suggest you learn to handstand by resting your feet against the wall. You should try to make this position exactly the same as you would in a regular handbalance.

Place the hands on the floor about 18 inches from the wall and with a kick go into the vertical position shown in Fig. 5. Hold this position as long as possible. If you feel dizzy at first it is because your body is doing something new. After a few tries dizziness will disappear.

WHILE HOLDING THE HANDSTAND against the wall try bending and straightening the elbows slightly. Shrug your shoulders, move your feet up and down the wall; you will notice that when you move your feet down you deepen the arch in your back.

Once you have become accustomed to holding this inverted position and have little difficulty supporting your bodyweight on your hands, the next move is to push your feet away from the wall and endeavor to maintain a "free" handstand even if only for a fraction of a second. In the process of handstanding against the wall you will, by trial and error, find the distance away from the wall best suited as to the placing of your hands. This distance should be such that the slightest push of the feet against the wall will bring them back to the floor.

If you are too far away your feet will hit the wall hard and you will be in a continual state of "overbalance" and will experience difficulty in pushing away from the wall in order for the feet to regain the floor. But, with the proper distance ascertained a little push, ever so slight, will move your feet away from the wall. Try to "catch" a balance before they come to the floor.

BY EXPERIMENTATION you will find that by bending the elbows a little your body is momentarily checked before the feet come to the floor, do not bend the elbows too much or you will have difficulty straightening them out unless, of course, you are very strong. This little exercise will teach you to check what is known as "underbalance"; something you must learn before being able to do a good "free" handstand. It is far more difficult to check "underbalance" than "overbalance" so do not mind spending some time at this.

Pressure on the fingers will check overbalance or, if worse comes to the worst you can always move one hand a few inches forward (as you would if trying to walk on your hands) although this is not recommended as the perfect handstand should be executed with no movement of the hands along the floor.

You would naturally think that pressure on the heel (carpus) of the hand would check underbalance, unfortunately, however, this is physically impossible and it is necessary to move the entire body back into the "plane of the center of gravity" that we talked about a few pages back and this is done by bending the elbows and straightening them.

THE NEXT METHOD of balancing you should learn is the common "Forearm Stand" or balance on the forearms. To do this; place the entire forearms and palms on the floor, bring your legs up close to the body in a position similar to that of a sprinter at starting. A vigorous kick of the legs will then bring you into a neat Forearm Stand as shown in Fig. 6. This is an important drill for the beginner as it requires a deep arch and this is necessary in later forms of handbalancing.

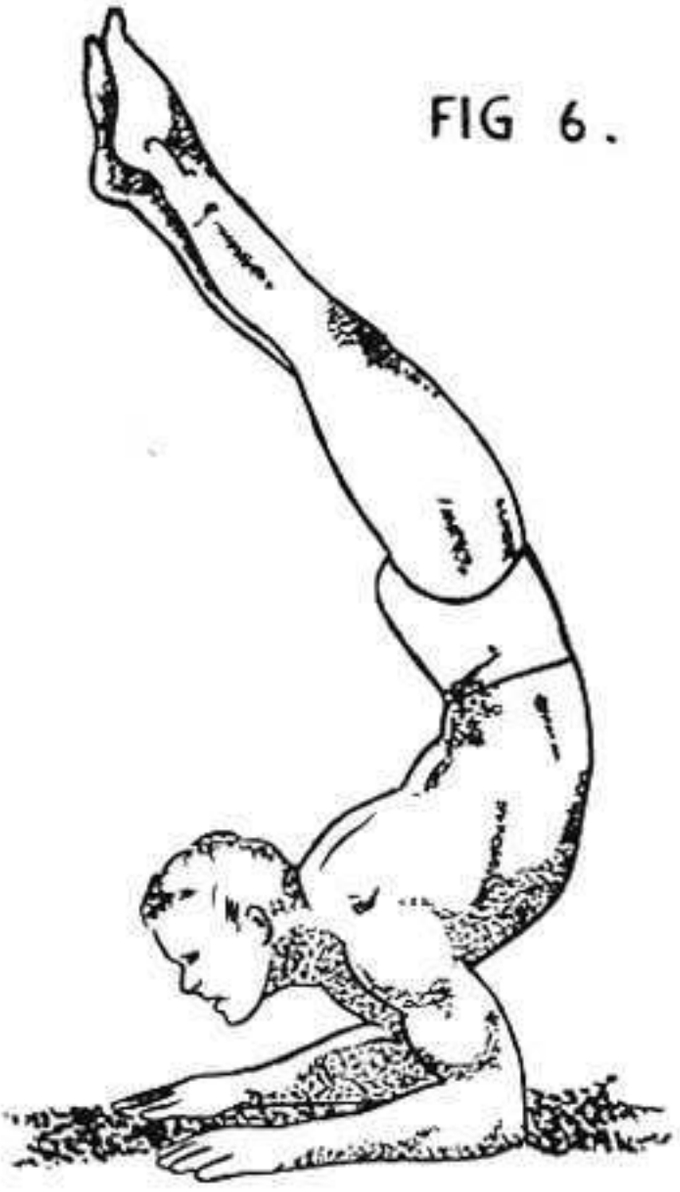


FIG 6.

If it is possible for you to train at handbalancing for one-half hour every day you should, if a beginner, practice the exercise shown in Fig. 2 (Page 3), the headstand (Fig. 4 on Page 6), the handstand against wall (Fig. 5 on Page 6) and the Forearm Stand for at least two weeks before starting to practice the free or regular handstand.

There are two methods of performing the regular handstand: the "kick-up" and the "press-up". Briefly the kick-up method requires placing the hands on the floor, leaning well forward then kicking up the legs, one after the other, and checking this motion when the proper position has been reached. The press-up method requires placing the hands on the floor, drawing the knees up inside each elbow, leaning well forward until the feet leave the floor (similar to the position in Fig. 2, Page 5) and then pressing the legs out until the proper position has been reached.

To most barbell trained men the press-out method offers no difficulties as they will have the strength with which to perform this movement. The kick-up is easier, conserves strength, but, to hit the perfect balance every time without moving the hands requires quite a lot of practice. Although I prefer the press-up as it

builds greater strength, however, the kick-up, by its ease, is the method you should learn first.

I DOUBT VERY MUCH if there is anyone who hasn't at some time or another tried to kick up into a handstand. At the beach or at the school playground you will notice that wherever a group of youngsters are playing that sooner or later they will try, with varying degrees of unsuccess, to perform a handstand. The usual procedure is to smack the palms on the ground and violently endeavor to kick the legs overhead. To the youngsters with no knowledge of the art of handbalancing this is just good healthy fun but few, if any, ever learned to balance by following this procedure. Incidently, a child, even at the age of seven to ten years, when properly coached will learn to become an expert handbalancer in an incredibly short time.

One of the best places to practice the kick-up handstand is at the beach or some soft ground. There is a definite advantage in practicing on soft ground inasmuch as the fingers can be pressed into the earth bringing them to a level lower than the heel of the hand. This is a great boon to the chap with the stiff wrists but; he may become an expert handbalancer in sand or soft earth, he will find that he won't be able to perform on the hardwood floor of the gym quite as well.

THE KICK-UP ROUTINE is simple, your kick will come quite naturally and the difficulty at first will either be; kicking too hard or not hard enough. It will take some practice for you to learn the exact amount of kick required to put your body in the correct handstand position with the minimum amount of compensating movements. Once you have mastered the kick going into the handstand becomes quite simple.

The procedure is: place the palms on the floor bringing the feet and legs close to the body much as in the position a sprinter would take when starting. Lean well forward as shown in Fig. 7A (Page 10) before you start your kick. THE FARTHER FORWARD YOU LEAN THE EASIER IT BECOMES. Kick one leg up after the other; the leg farthest to the rear first in a large arc then the other imparting a vigorous push after the first leg has travelled about half the distance between the floor and the vertical as shown in Fig. 7B on Page 10.

THE KICK-UP HANDSTAND

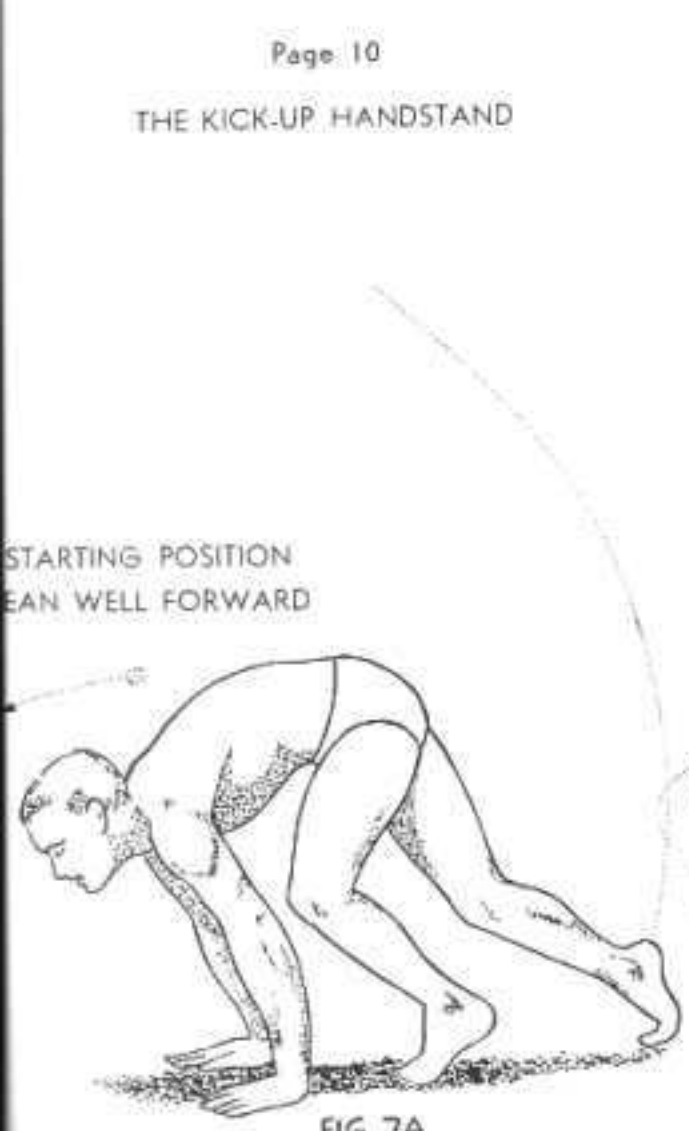


FIG. 7A.

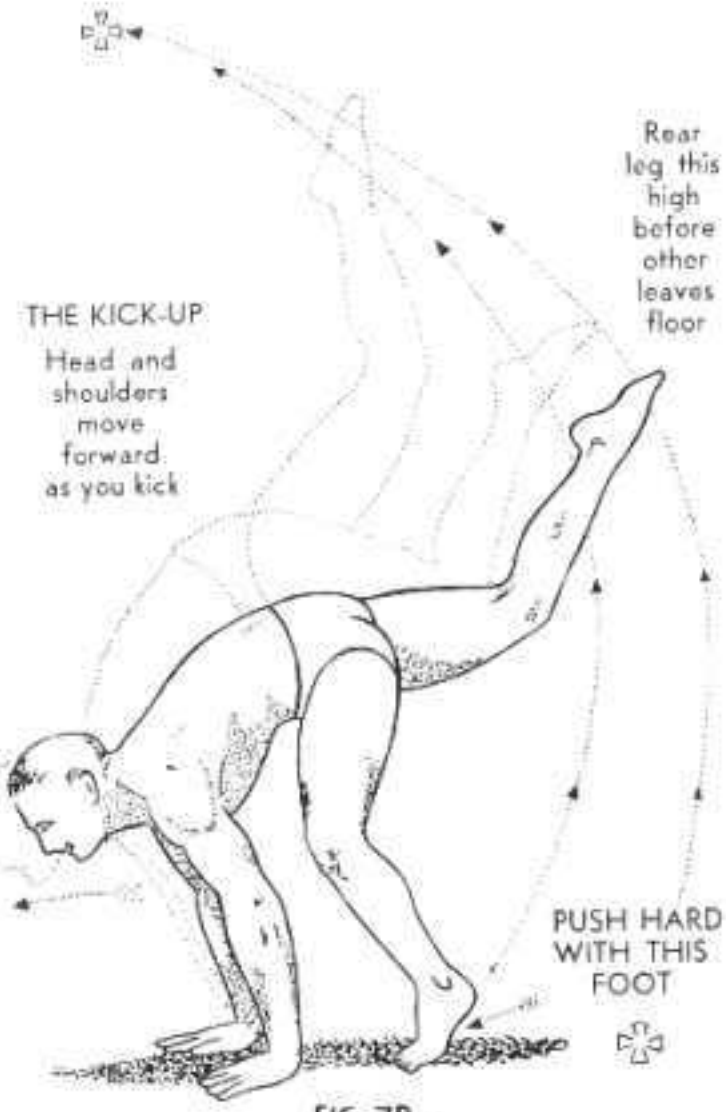


FIG. 7B.



FIG. 7C.

YOU SHOULD HAVE NO DIFFICULTY in kicking up into something of a vertical handstand if you have mastered the preceding steps as outlined in this Course. Should you kick too hard either tuck the head between the shoulders and go into a simple front roll or lift one hand off the floor and take a step forward. Learn to do one or the other as a fall flat on the back is both teeth jaring and disconcerting not to mention discouraging.

The leg last to leave the floor must be brought up to the vertical position alongside the other leg but should not travel through as large an arc. It is important that this leg should be kept bent considerably until it has reached the angle shown by the dotted lines in Fig. 7B, Page 10. It is then extended straight.

During your initial attempts by all means try to keep the legs together. Although you will find you can maintain some sort of a balance by maneuvering the legs around THE LEGS ARE NOT USED TO MAINTAIN THE PERFECT BALANCE. Early in the process of learning a good handstand we can maintain a balance or state of equilibrium by moving the entire body, keeping it straight however, from the shoulders but, as I mentioned before, the perfect balance is kept by pressure of the fingers against the floor.

THE BEST WAY FOR THE NOVICE to utilize his finger pressure is the "continual overbalancing system" which I have always advocated not only because it is so stable but you develop greater strength in the process and any form of sport or pleasure that develops more strength is worth doing.

You will notice in the diagram of the regular handstand (Fig. 7C, Page 10) a dotted line has been drawn approximately through the center of the figure. This line represents the "plane of the center of gravity". The center of gravity is a theoretical point somewhere in the balancing body and this dotted line runs through that point. Its purpose here is to show you, when in a perfect balance, that the amount of weight on each side of the line is almost equal - almost but not quite, for there should be slightly more bodyweight on the "A" side of the line than on the "B" side. This is the "Continual overbalancing" that I mentioned. Normally the body would fall

In the direction of the "A" side but pressure on the finger-tips must be great enough to prevent this from happening but not enough to thrust the body back past the line to the "B" side. You can, through practice, maintain this state of "continual overbalance" to such an extent that very little pressure is required of the fingers.

You must practice elementary balances until such time as you can keep the body, from shoulders to feet, reasonably rigid. Once you can do this the amount of muscular effort required to maintain a balance is greatly simplified. When you have reached the point where you can concentrate entirely on finger-tip pressure you have made good progress and in all probability are doing a perfect regular handstand.

IF YOU PRESS TOO HARD on the fingers when slightly overbalanced you naturally push the body back past the vertical line to the "B" side. When this happens your feet fall to the floor since the heel (carpus) of the hand cannot offer pressure as did the finger-tips when you were overbalanced. When there is more bodyweight on the "B" side of the line (causing the feet to fall to the floor) this is known as "underbalance".

To check underbalance it is necessary to quickly bend the elbows thus lowering the shoulders and head and thrusting more bodyweight on the "A" side to compensate for the added weight on the "B" side due to underbalance. You must bend the elbows until the downward movement of the feet has been retarded then they must be carefully straightened until the body is brought back past the vertical line and the state of overbalance resumed. (See Fig. 8 at right).

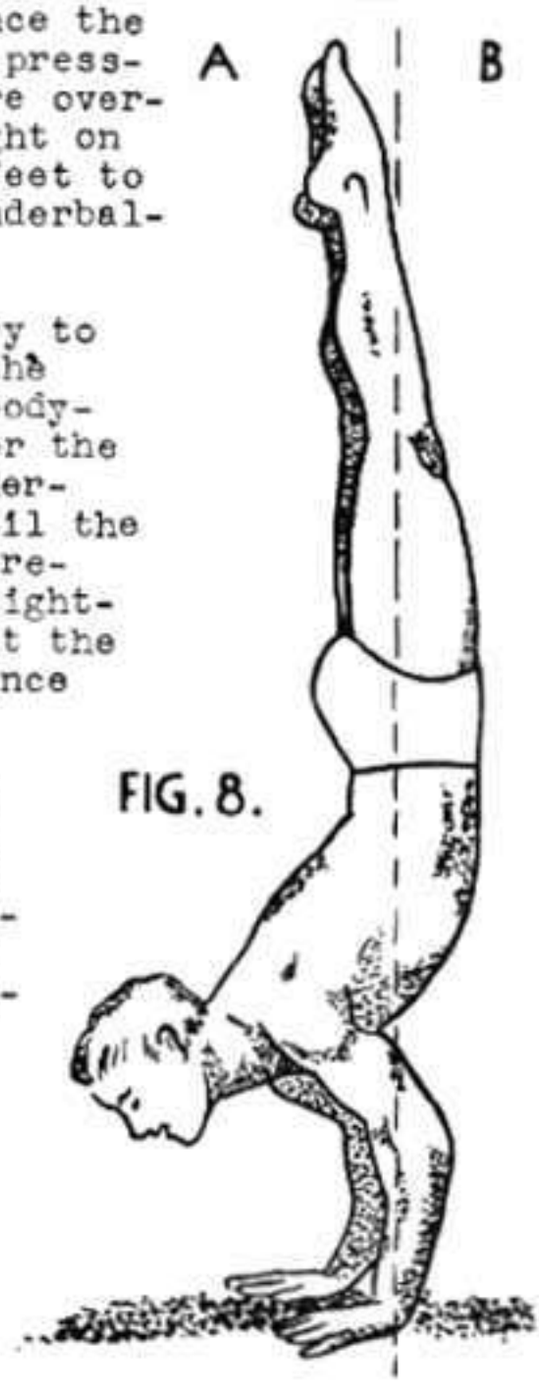


FIG. 8.

To sum up what we have just learned; the body is kept in a state of overbalance and pressure of the fingers on the floor maintains the balance. Underbalance, the tendency for the feet to fall back to the floor, is corrected by bending the elbows then straightening them to regain the proper position.

THERE ARE SOME CHAPS who have learned be fairly proficient handbalancers by using the overbalancing method but catch or prevent the body from falling by walking forward on the hands a few inches or in some cases, a few feet. As I mentioned before; it is possible to control your balance by staggering around on the hands but other than being far from neat it ultimately gets the would-be balancer into bad habits that are later hard to correct.

You remember the old saying about "practice makes perfect"? Well, practice is required to perfect handbalancing but if you do a thing wrong you also perfect the errors, that is why it is so important to practice whatever you are doing, be it bodybuilding, weightlifting or, in this case, handbalancing, correctly from the very beginning. I know you want to progress as fast as possible but bear what I have just said in mind; that is why I have taken so much time with the very elementary stages of handbalancing.

As I mentioned when I started the description of the kick-up that it was far easier to learn on the beach or soft ground. If you have made fairly good progress outside you should now practice your movements either on the hard floor or pavement. (There is a little apparatus known as "Floor-bars" which make handbalancing very much simpler and these I will describe later as they are useful in performing some of the difficult balances and planches.)

TO SUM UP a few important pointers in the kick-up handstand before going on to the various types;

1. Lean well forward before kicking up.
2. Keep the legs together and knees straight.
3. Overbalance and maintain position with finger pressure.
4. Bend elbows slightly to correct underbalance.
5. Don't stagger around. The perfect balance should contain a minimum of compensating movements.
6. Get rid of balancing errors early; practice also perfects your errors as well as your ability.

I HAVE OFTEN BEEN ASKED; "just what does the perfect handstand look like?" There are many expert handbalancers and it seems that each one has a different idea on this. Some insist that it is only perfect when the normal back arch (the amount the same person would have if standing erect on his feet) is shown in the handstand position (see Fig. 9A). There are others who prefer a very deep arch claiming it is more graceful and requires less effort once mastered (see Fig. 9B). A third prevalent group insists that only the 'Continental' type of handstand is correct (see Fig. 9C). The 'Continental' allows practically no arch - the legs and lower part of the body in line with the arms.

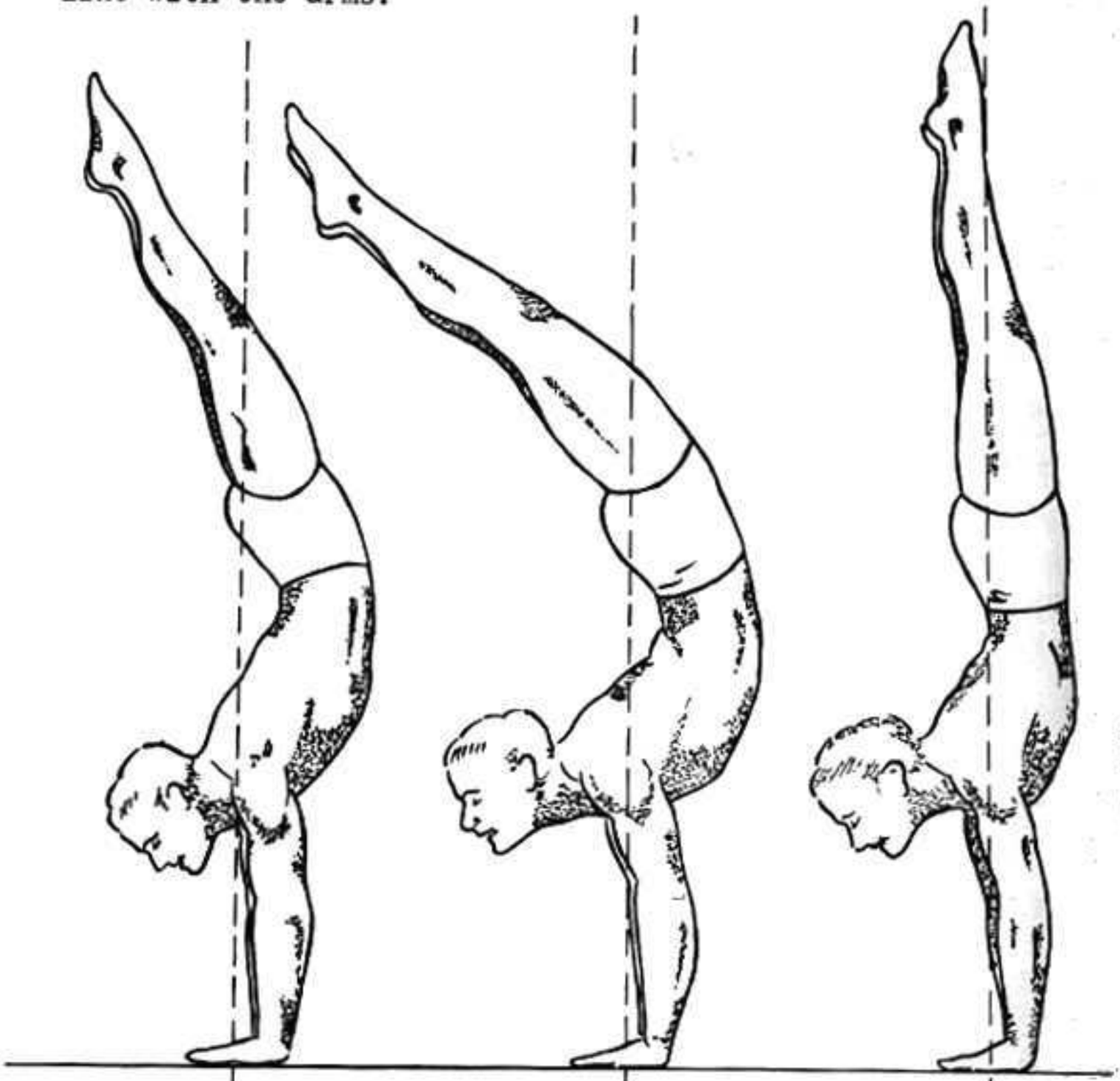


FIG.9A FIG.9B. FIG.9C.

I LIKE TO SEE ALL TYPES if they are performed adroitly, gracefully and with complete assurance on the part of the balancer. I do believe, though, that one type of handstand is better for a certain type of build than an other. You will have to judge this for yourself; any handstand you can perform that is 'solid' (with a minimum amount of body movement) with the legs and feet neatly extended, will be perfect. I will say, however, that the 'Continental' type requires more strength hence it will build more strength. The deep arch balance, on the other hand, requires less strength and effort.

One way to find out which is best suited for your particular type of physique is to try holding a handbalance for a long period of time. The average novice handbalancer will do well if he can hold a handstand for 15 or 20 seconds. When you can hold a balance without moving the hands for a period of one minute you are getting to be an accomplished handbalancer.

Try the three types of balance shown on page 14 holding each for as long a time as you can; the type which you hold the longest should be the one for you.

ONCE YOU HAVE LEARNED the kick-up handstand and have mastered it fairly well you should immediately go to work on the 'press-up'. In all forms of hand-to-hand work and balancing on different pieces of apparatus the press-up or its variation, the 'swing-up', must be employed.

Before going into the intricacies of the press-up handstand we should make a simple little piece of apparatus known as 'floor-parallels' or 'floor-bars'. You will need a pair of these and they can be constructed in a few minutes. Details and measurements will be found in the diagram on Page 16 (Fig. 10). It is much easier to learn the press-up on floor-bars than with the palms flat on the ground. I recommend learning the press-up first on the floor-bars then later on the ground. It is easier to press-up because, in gripping the floor-bars the strength of the forearm muscles can be better brought into play.

If you have practiced the exercise shown on Page 5, (Fig. 3) and find it quite easy to hold a balance and move the body a bit, then try it with your knees between the elbows. (See Fig. 11). Lean forward as much as possible

HOW TO MAKE "FLOOR-BARS"

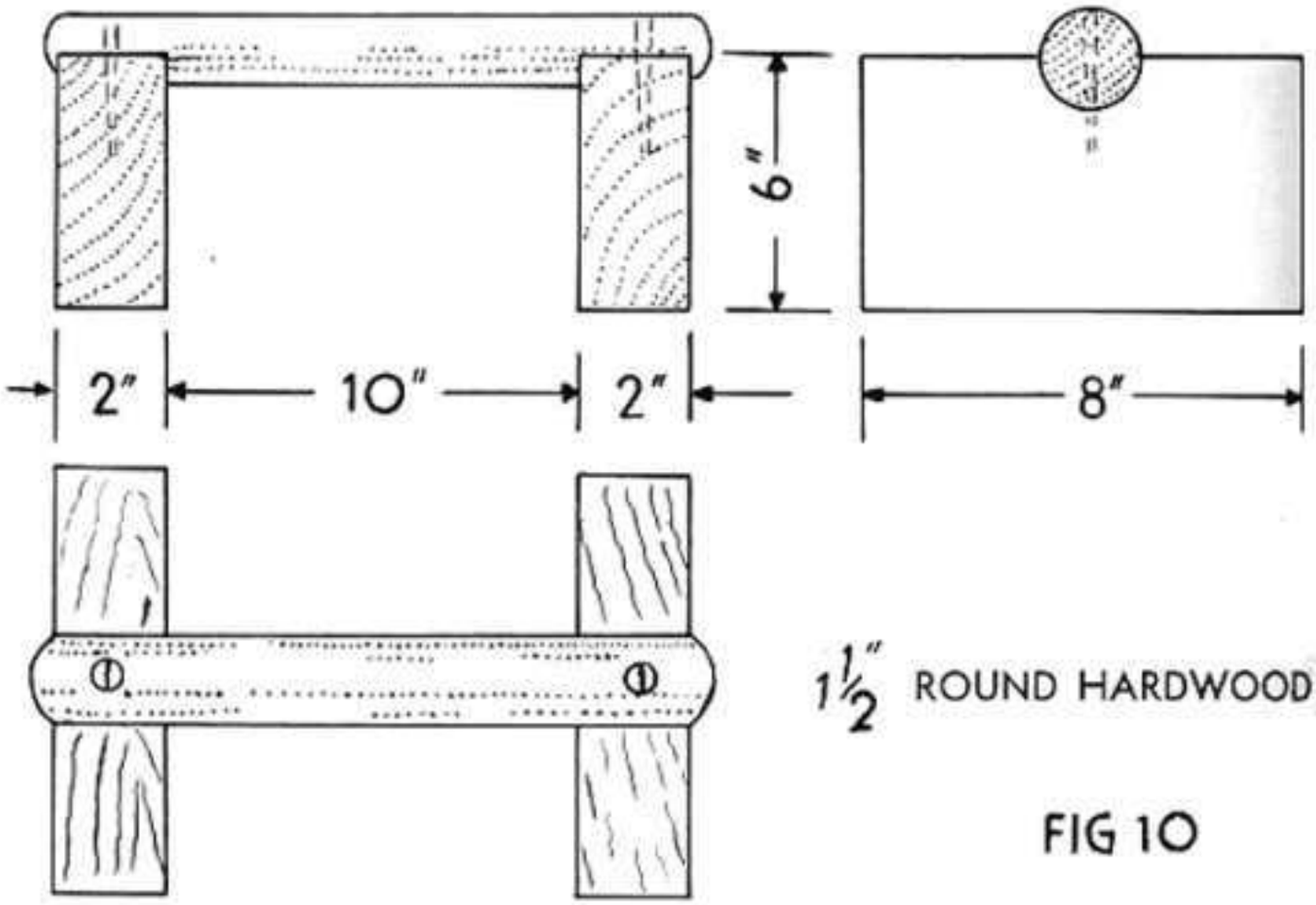
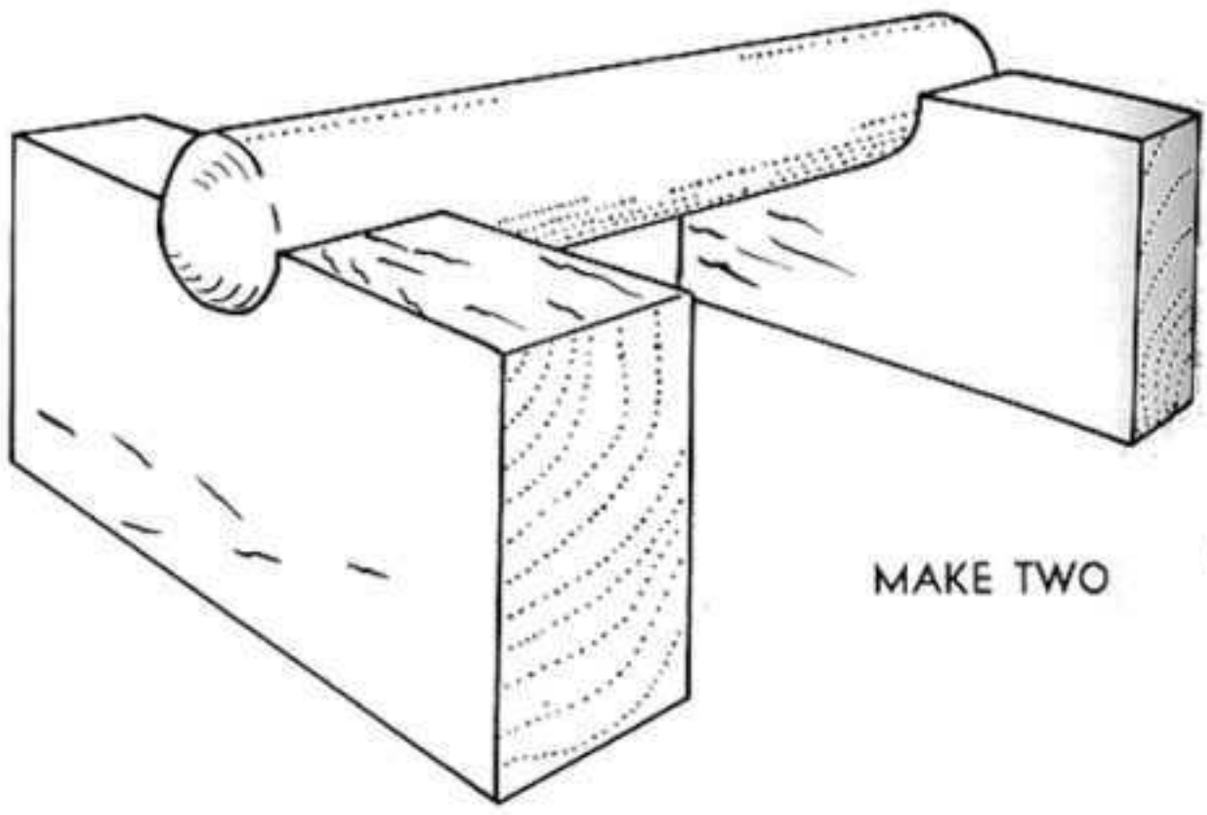


FIG 10



MAKE TWO



FIG. 11.

and with each successive try raise the buttocks a little higher each time until you can assume the position as shown by the dotted lines in Fig. 11 (above). When in this position try to straighten the arms. If you can do this you will have less difficulty in the completed press-up to handstand.

As the press-up to handstand requires unusual arm strength here are a few exercises you should practice to build up the necessary strength; the two dumbells press, the two hands military press with barbell and, if you have no weight training apparatus, practice dipping exercises on your floor-bars. All the above mentioned movements build tricep strength which you need very much in all forms of handbalancing.

FOR YOUR FIRST ATTEMPT at a complete press-up handstand place your floor-bars on the floor about shoulder width apart. They should be parallel although some chaps have found that by turning the ends of the floor-bars farthest away inwards slightly it is easier to balance.

Grasp the bars firmly and with the elbows bent lean well forward (as you did in the exercise shown in Fig. 11) and at the same time bring the knees in between the elbows. Lift your feet from the floor and keep leaning forward but don't

bend the elbows too much. There is a tendency on the part of the beginner to bend the elbows too far at first. It is true that it feels easier because the legs and buttocks (legs are still doubled) reach the proper position over the hands with less effort, but, unless you are very strong you will have far more trouble pressing the arms out (straightening the elbows) and a few attempts at this form of press-up with the elbows bent too much will leave the novice exhausted.

CAREFULLY STUDY THE POSITIONS SHOWN ON PAGE 19.

Let us analyze each of the six stages as shown in Fig. 12 on the following page.

A. Is the starting position with feet off the ground and the head and shoulders leaning well forward. This is the same as the starting position in the exercise you tried previously (Fig. 11).

B. Leaning still farther forward the buttocks are raised higher and the arms bent slightly.

C. The buttocks are now almost vertically over the shoulders but the legs are still bent.

D. At this stage the legs commence to straighten out, upper body remains in about the same position as in C.

E. Legs are straightened completely out but arms are still bent. Perfect balance must be maintained in this position before arms can be fully extended.

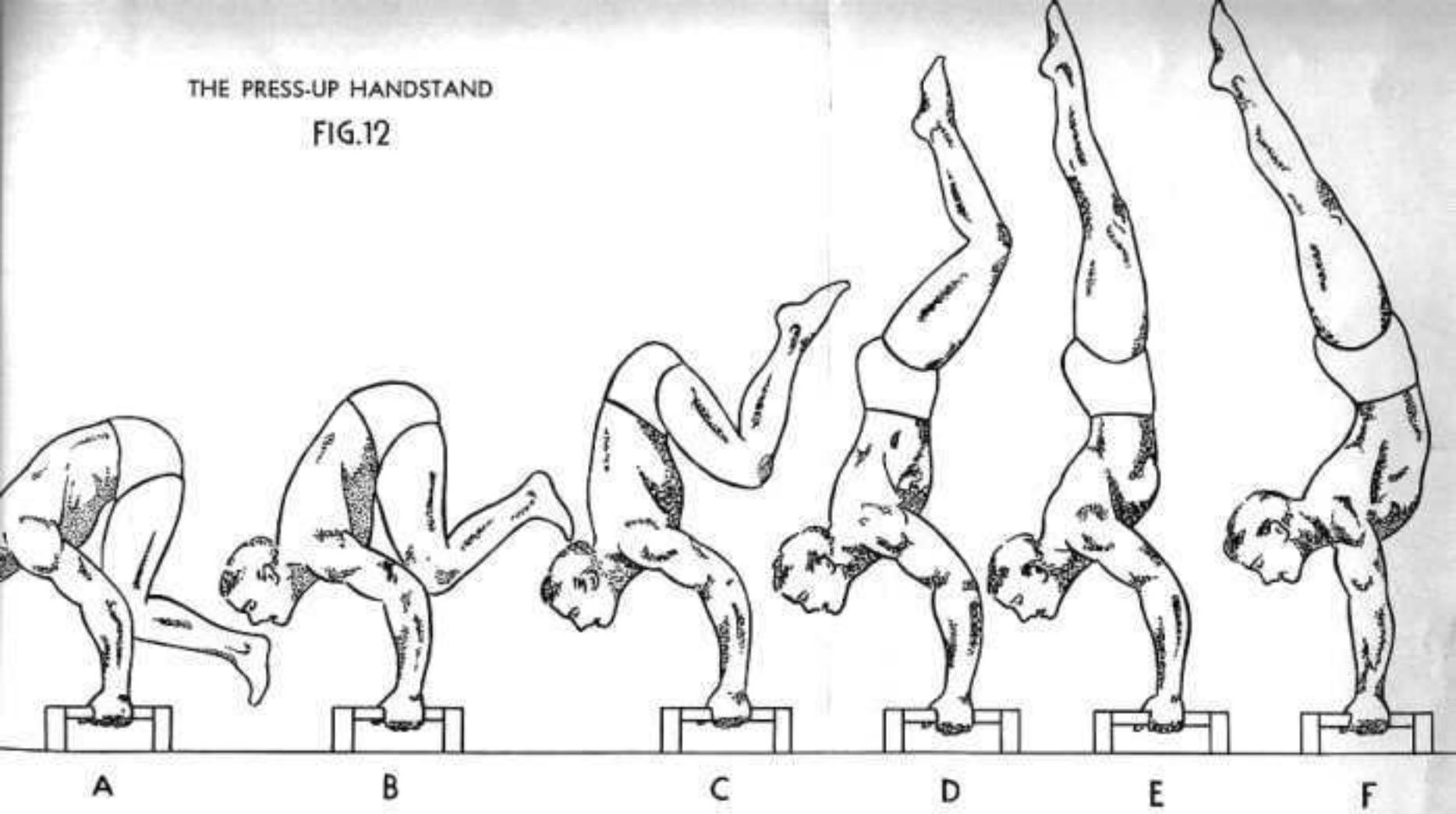
F. The press-up handstand is finished by straightening out the arms. Arch is deepened to maintain correct amount of overbalance.

Note: During the press-up into handstand your control should be such that you can maintain a balance in any one of the six stages shown on the chart on Page 19. In other words, you should be sufficiently accomplished in handbalancing to stop the press-up and remain in that position in any one of the stages.

There is a tendency on the part of the beginner to straighten the legs out too fast. This may destroy your balance and the entire effort be lost. Remember; at all times during the 'tuck-in' and press-up the body must be in perfect balance. You are actually performing a handbalance the instant you take your feet off the floor.

THE PRESS-UP HANDSTAND

FIG.12



ONCE THE PRESS-UP HANDSTAND has been mastered on the floor-bars, you should learn to do it on the surface of the floor. You will find that you can't lean forward quite as far with the palms flat on the floor and the legs must be doubled up more and tucked in closer to the body. That few inches elevation the floor-bars gave you you will soon discover to be quite an advantage.

You won't be able to practice the press-up as often as you did the kick-up. It takes real strength to do the former but you will be well repaid for your efforts, not only in balancing ability but in additional strength and a finer pair of shoulders and upper arms. A half a dozen press-up handstands are equivalent to a good workout. You are actually pressing your bodyweight every time you do this form of handstand.

TO SUM UP a few important pointers in the press-up handstand;

1. Lean well forward and tuck the legs as close to the body as possible. (This will reduce the leverage against you).

2. Keep the legs doubled until almost vertically over the hands before attempting to straighten them out.

3. Don't bend the elbows too much at first. (The amount shown in the diagrams is about right).

4. Maintain perfect control at all times. Straighten the legs out deliberately but carefully.

5. Take a good rest between each attempt. Don't get too tired or your additional attempts will be discouraging.

THE LENGTH OF TIME it will take you to master the press-up handstand depends mostly on your strength, particularly in the arms and shoulders. If you are a barbell man I will say that in less than a month you can become very proficient at this form of balance. But don't be discouraged if it should take longer; most hand-balancers I have talked to assure me that, at the very least, three months are required to learn the press-up <u>after the kick-up has been mastered</u>.

Once your press-up gets to be fairly easy you should practice it on various objects, objects of varying heights and shapes. Try to do it on a box or bench about 12 ins.

high. A slight jump is required to bring the legs to the proper tucked in position necessary to start to press-up. The higher the bench or box the more jump required.

Try a balance on a bar such as a low fence rail. This requires the hands to be turned at right angles to the position used on the floor-bars during the press-up. Try the handstand with the hands at varying widths; sometimes close together, sometimes far apart. All such forms of balancing will greatly improve your ability and aid you immeasurably should your desire to perform hand-to-hand work later on.

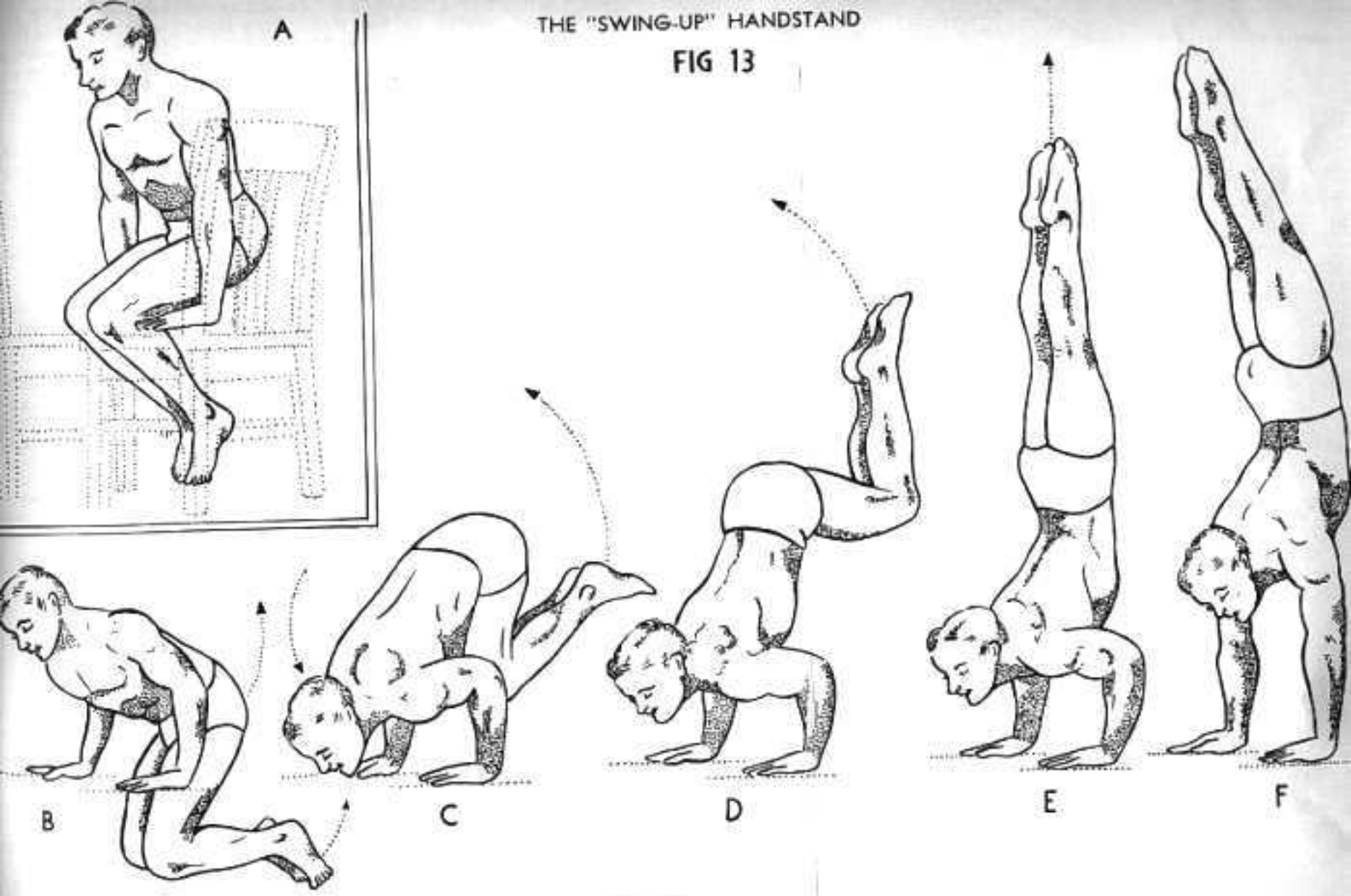
MOST HANDBALANCERS enjoy some hand-to-hand work. Before trying even the most elementary stunts you must first learn the 'swing-up' to handstand. If you are to be a top mounter in a hand-to-hand team your proficiency in swinging up to the handstand will conserve both your strength and that of your understander as well as make it possible to do more difficult feats.

Take two chairs (or boxes or benches if they are about the same height as a kitchen chair) and place them a little more than shoulder width apart. Place your hands one on the edge of each chair and lift the feet off the floor. (Consult the starting position 'A' on the chart on the next page). The 'swing-up' requires the coordination of leaning forward quickly and tucking the legs into the body (as in 'B' and 'C', Fig. 13, next page). With a little practice you will soon learn to do both at the same time. When you have attained the proper coordination of leaning forward and tucking you will find that your legs and buttocks reach the proper position for straightening out very easily and quickly. ('C' and 'D' in Fig. 13.).

In the 'swing-up' your arms will be bent more than in the regular press-up but by now, assuming you have done enough press-ups, they should be strong enough to straighten out at the same time you straighten out the legs without too much difficulty. Check your swing instantly the position for straightening out the legs has been reached (position 'D', Fig. 13.). Push the legs out to that of 'E', Fig. 13. Note, however, there should be no distinct pause at this point. The checking of the forward and downward swinging of the head and shoulders and the unfolding of the legs should be one smooth and continuous motion. If you plan to be top-mounter in a hand-to-hand team by all means learn the swing-up well.

THE "SWING-UP" HANDSTAND

FIG 13



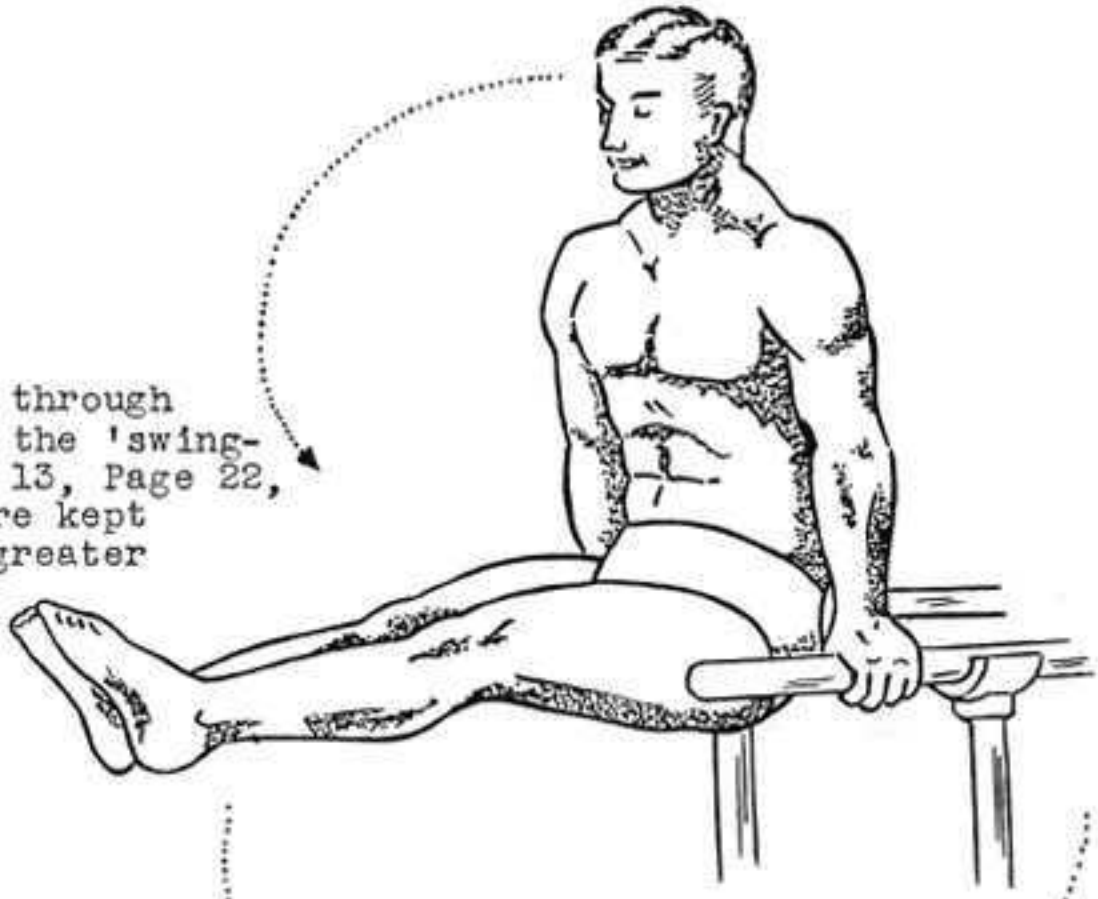
ONCE YOU HAVE LEARNED the 'swing-up' with the legs folded as in Fig. 13 (Page 22.) try to do the 'half-lever swing-up' as shown below, Fig. 14. This is an excellent variation and requires very strong abdominal muscles in order to properly execute the 'half-lever'. (To develop your abdominals do plenty of 'sit-ups' on an inclined abdominal board).

If you have access to high parallel bars such as found in Y M C A and High School gymnasiums by all means practice this 'half-lever swing-up movement on them.

THE "HALF-LEVER SWING-UP"

FIG. 14.

Note: The follow through is the same as in the 'swing-up' shown in Fig. 13, Page 22, except the legs are kept straight. Much greater swing is required.



THIS IS the completion of the FIRST COURSE. Do not start on the second until this one has been well studied. The SECOND COURSE embraces the very difficult two hand-stands, stunts, one hand stands, one hand planche and dropping from the one hand stand to the planche - one of the most difficult of handbalancing feats.

The SECOND COURSE is bound separately so, please, before embarking on it learn this first one well.

END OF COURSE #1